

BUTLER, WILLIAM

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CONTEMPORARIES

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# Abraham Lincoln's Contemporaries

William Butler

Excerpts from newspapers and other  
sources

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# LINCOLN LORE

Bulletin of the Lincoln National Life Foundation - - - - - Dr. Louis A. Warren, Editor.  
Published each week by The Lincoln National Life Insurance Company, of Fort Wayne, Indiana.

No. 207

FORT WAYNE, INDIANA

March 27, 1933

## THE EXPURGATED TEXT OF HERNDON'S LINCOLN

No book about Abraham Lincoln has been more severely criticised by some and more favorably mentioned by others than the biography by William Herndon. It was published first in 1889 as a three-volume work, and three years later it was reprinted in what has become known as the expurgated two-volume edition.

Those who have been unfriendly to Abraham Lincoln have had much to say about the alleged propaganda which caused the three-volume work to be reduced to two volumes, with the inference that much historical data, unfavorable to Lincoln, was not used in the revised edition. Many Lincoln students also have come to believe that if they do not own the original three-volume edition, they are losing much valuable historical data. The fact is that, although the same size type and the same number of lines to the page were used in both editions, the supposed expurgated edition has forty-three pages more in the text than the original three-volume work. It also includes in addition an introduction of ten pages by Horace White.

The so-called expurgated edition in reality is an enlarged edition as already stated. If one will review the table of contents of the two editions he will find that an entirely new chapter appears in volume one which discusses Lincoln's visit to New England. There are thirteen pages in this chapter. Another addition to the two-volume work is the whole of chapter four in volume two. This is a detailed account of the Lincoln-Douglas debates by Horace White, and adds forty-four pages to the expurgated edition. At the very conclusion of the book there is added to the appendix an article of three pages on Lincoln at Fort Monroe.

There are but two instances in the entire three volumes where data was deleted before the second edition was printed. On page three Herndon wrote a paragraph on Lincoln's ancestry in which he brought serious charges against both the mother and grandmother of the president. The stories, based on purely traditional data, which now has been discredited, occupied approximately three pages. This is one of the two deleted sections in the book. The expurgated data did not cast any reflection whatever on the character of Abraham Lincoln. The only real loss to biographers from its deletion is the following oft-repeated statement which Herndon claimed Lincoln made to him: "God bless my mother; all that I am or ever hope to be I owe to her."

No further change in the text of the original work is made until page fifty is reached. Here some traditional reminiscences of Lincoln's boyhood in Indiana are deleted from the text. Herndon was of the opinion that Lincoln had a grudge against the Grigsby family, and exhibits some evidence which he gathered in the form of satires which he claims Lincoln composed.

Herndon's first story grew out of the double wedding when the brothers, Ruben and Charles Grigsby, married Betsy Ray and Matilda Hawkins respectively. This gave Lincoln, according to Herndon, a theme for "The Chronicles" he is said to have written. This backwoods literature was rude and coarse, and if designed to ridicule the Grigsbys it must have achieved its purpose. While the authorship has never been proved beyond a question of a doubt, there is some likelihood that Lincoln was the author.

About the same time Herndon claims that Lincoln composed a burlesque verse which ridiculed William Grigsby. It was not too vulgar for Herndon to print in his book, but, if Lincoln wrote it, as Herndon claims he did, it does not go down to Lincoln's credit. These two Grigsby stories, including the foot notes, take up six pages of the text and account for the larger part of the excerpted data which does not appear in the two-volume work.

From page fifty-six on to the close of the three-volume work there is no further attempt to cut out any of the

text of this first edition. Thus it will be observed that the three-page story of Lincoln's ancestry and parentage and the six-page story about the Grigsbys is the sum total of all printed matter that does not appear in the much featured expurgated two-volume edition.

Instead of mourning over the loss of the two deleted sections in the first edition, Lincoln students should deeply regret that much more of the story as told by Herndon was not expurgated before the second and subsequent editions of the biography were sent to the press.

If all the data not true to fact had been deleted from the first chapter of the original work, at least half of the text would have been lost. Following are some of the subjects which Herndon, through exaggeration or misrepresentation, has made valueless to those who are interested in historical accuracy: pages 4, 5, and 6, properly deleted by Herndon himself; sketch of Thomas Lincoln, pages 11 and 12; Nancy Hanks' relation to the Sparrows, etc., page 13; Lincoln's parents at Elizabethtown camp meeting, pages 14 and 15; and many minor details.

The second chapter is but little better, with these inaccuracies outstanding: Abraham Lincoln's cruelty to animals, page 18; Thomas Lincoln's attitude towards slavery, page 19; land deals of Thomas Lincoln, page 19; the river trip, page 20; the half-faced camp, page 21; Thomas Lincoln's abuse of his son, page 22; exaggeration of Sarah Bush's economic condition, page 30; and many purely traditional statements of no historical value.

The third chapter contains the six deleted pages already mentioned and much more data based on traditions which it would be difficult to support by any authoritative evidence.

One word may be said, however, in favor of the first printed edition—the illustrative material is far superior both in quality and volume to that in the two-volume work.

These pictures appearing in the three-volume work do not appear in the two-volume publication:

Volume one: Dennis Hanks; brick mold made by Thomas Lincoln; the Crawford Home; Josiah Crawford; Judge John Pitcher; John Hanks; grave of Thomas Lincoln; certificate of surveying; Mary S. Owens; Ninnian W. Edwards; page from Lincoln-Stuart fee book; Joshua F. Speed; Stuart-Lincoln office.

Volume two: Mary Todd; Sarah Rickard; Julia Jayne; group—Stuart, Butterfield, Herndon, Matheney, Shields; group—Ferguson, Logan, Baker, Broadwell, Conkling; group—Merryman, Shutt, Yates, McGaughey, Butler, Judge Treat; five Lincoln portraits; A. Campbell.

Volume three: First Presbyterian Church; Norman B. Judd; letter to the Kansas delegate; Old State House; Lincoln portraits; A. Campbell.

Volume three: First Presbyterian Church; Norman B. Judd; letter to the Kansas delegate; Old State House; Lincoln parlor in Springfield; Mrs. Ninnian W. Edwards; Mrs. Lincoln in the White House; Leonard Sweet; Henry C. Whitney; John M. Palmer; five portraits of Lincoln; plan of box of Ford's Theatre; groups of statuary on Lincoln monument in Springfield; group—Keyes, Brown, Dresser, McClelland, Edwards; group—Hay, Rosett, Logan, Zane, Collons.

There have been two reprints of the original Herndon work in recent years. In 1921 a three-volume work was published by The Herndon-Lincoln Publishing Company. It is a facsimile work minus the illustrative material.

In 1930 Paul M. Angle edited a reprint of the three volume work bound under one cover. Although it does not contain any of the illustrative material in the first edition, it does have at least two marked advantages over all other editions—an excellent and complete index and valuable foot notes pointing out some arguments in the text which research has proven to be untenable.





# LINCOLN LORE

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Published each week by The Lincoln National Life Insurance Company, of Fort Wayne, Indiana.

No. 227

FORT WAYNE, INDIANA

August 14, 1933

## WHERE LINCOLN LIVED THROUGHOUT THE YEARS

While most of the homes in which Lincoln lived are known, the period of time which he spent in each dwelling is not so well established. In round numbers he resided in Kentucky seven years; Indiana fourteen years; rural Illinois seven years; in Springfield, Illinois, twenty-one years; and in Washington seven years. It will be noted that these terms of years are all multiples of seven which makes the task of remembering them much easier.

### *Hodgenville, Ky.*

*February 1809 to May 1811*

The year of Lincoln's birth is well known and the location of the birthplace cabin is also well established. It is true that early biographers note but one Kentucky home of the Lincolns while later historians state that he lived in the Hodgenville home four years. Now we have documentary proof that the Lincolns lived on the birthplace farm three miles south of Hodgenville on the Old Cumberland Road but two years.

### *Knob Creek, Ky.*

*May 1811 to November 1816*

As early as May 11, 1811, Thomas Lincoln had established his family in a cabin on Knob Creek about eight miles north of Hodgenville. This home was on the same Cumberland Road which passed by the birthplace cabin. The importance of this site is becoming more and more significant as the boyhood days of Lincoln, from two to seven years of age, were spent here. Soon after November 11, 1816, the Lincolns moved from the Knob Creek home.

### *Spencer County, Ind.*

*November 1816 to March 1830*

The migration of the Lincolns from Kentucky to Indiana would probably consume about five days as it was less than a hundred miles. By the first of December, 1816, they must have been in Indiana. The Lincolns settled at a point where Lincoln City is now located and remained in this home for fourteen years. In fact Abraham Lincoln's residence was changed but twice during the first twenty-one years of his life.

### *Macon County, Ill.*

*March 1830 to July 1831*

The first home of the Lincolns in Illinois according to the President was "on the north side of the Sangamon River at the junction of the Cumberland and prairie, about ten miles westerly from Decatur." The family must have been well settled there by the first of April, 1830, and Lincoln looked upon this place as his home until the following year when his parents moved to Coles County. While he may have boarded in different homes during the winter of the deep snow in 1830 and lived at Sangamon town while the Offutt flatboat was being

constructed, we cannot think of any of these places as permanent residences.

### *New Salem, Ill.*

*July 1831 to April 1837*

Lincoln is said to have lived with John Cameron while he was a clerk for Offutt. One authority says that "Lincoln soon changed his home. He went and boarded with Mr. James Rutledge about the year 1833." Rutledge built his tavern about 1830 but in 1833 Henry Onsett became the landlord and was the proprietor for two years.

Reep, one of the most dependable of the New Salem historians, states that "whenever he was out of employment Lincoln never hesitated to make his home with Jack and Hannah Armstrong." It seems quite likely that after his return from the Black Hawk War, where he had been closely associated with Armstrong, he may have gone to his home to live.

When Lincoln became proprietor of a store and Postmaster it appears as if he used a small room adjacent to the store room as a lodging place.

Reep is also the authority for the statement that after Ann Rutledge's death in 1835 "Lincoln made his home for a considerable portion of the time with his friend, Bowling Green." The old home of Squire Bowling Green was located at the foot of the bluffs about a half mile north of New Salem.

### *Speed's Store, Springfield, Ill.*

*April 1837 to January 1841*

The date of the removal of Abraham Lincoln from New Salem to Springfield is very clearly stated in his autobiographical sketch. He says that "In the autumn of 1836 he obtained a law license and on April 15, 1837, removed to Springfield and commenced the practice." The story of his rooming with Joshua Speed is familiar to all Lincoln students.

### *William Butler Home, Springfield, Ill.*

*January 1841 to November 1842*

After Speed sold out his business and went to Kentucky Lincoln moved to William Butler's house where Speed and he had taken their meals. Lincoln was living here when he visited Speed in Kentucky.

### *Globe Tavern, Springfield, Ill.*

*November 1842 to August 1843*

Immediately after their marriage in the Edward's home Mr. and Mrs. Lincoln went to live in Globe Tavern. This public boarding house was situated on Adams Street and kept by a widow by the name of Beck. In this tavern Robert Lincoln, the first child of Mr. and Mrs. Lincoln, was born.

### *Monroe Street Home, Springfield, Ill.*

*August 1843 to May 1844*

A recent book by Dr. Evans published the statement that shortly after Robert Lincoln's birth the family moved to a modest cottage on Monroe Street. Beveridge states that the one-story frame house into which they moved at this time was at 214 South Fourth Street.

### *Eighth Street Home, Springfield, Ill.*

*May 1844 to March 1847*

The best-known home of Lincoln in Springfield, and the one that has now become the property of the state is situated on Eighth Street. On January 7, 1844, Lincoln and Charles Dresser, the owner of the property, entered into an agreement whereby Lincoln was to come into possession of the home, and on May 2, 1844, Dresser deeded Lincoln the property.

### *Sprigg's Boarding House,*

*Washington, D. C.*

*March 1847 to March 1849*

When Lincoln first went to Washington as a Congressman his family accompanied him and they made their home in the boarding house of Mrs. Spriggs. It was situated on Capitol Hill and was the fourth of a row of houses known as Carroll Row. The house was a three-story brick. Although Mrs. Lincoln did not remain here throughout the entire first session it appears that for a time at least during Lincoln's term as Congressman this might serve as the Washington home of Abraham Lincoln. There is some evidence that during the second session he changed his boarding place.

### *Eighth Street Home, Springfield, Ill.*

*March 1849 to February 1861*

After Lincoln's return from Congress he again became settled in the Eighth Street home. During the year 1856 the house was raised to a two-story building, and it is this home as we now observe it that was occupied by the Lincolns but five years before Lincoln moved to Washington.

### *Chenery House, Springfield, Ill.*

*February 1861*

In preparation for leaving Springfield the Lincolns sold their household goods and rented the Eighth Street home. The family moved to the Chenery House which stood on the northeast corner of Fourth and Washington Streets. They occupied rooms on the second floor facing Fourth Street.

### *Willard's Hotel, Washington, D. C.*

*February and March 1861*

Upon arriving in Washington on February 23, Mr. and Mrs. Lincoln occupied "a suit of five elegantly furnished rooms in the southwest corner of Willard's Hotel which fronted on Pennsylvania Avenue and overlooked the White House."

### *White House, Washington, D. C.*

*March 1861 to April 1865*

Lincoln was inaugurated on March 4, 1861, and from that time until his death the White House was his official home. During the residence here his son, William Lincoln, died.

### *Anderson Cottage, Washington, D. C.*

*Summers 1861 to 1864*

The Anderson cottage in the Soldiers' Home grounds was the summer White House of the President and his family. It was about four miles from the White House to the north, and Lincoln rode back and forth each day.





all, the heavy mass of black hair, which was quite long, stood out from his head in a very obstinate way, except where it fell over his forehead, which I discovered was very beautiful and symmetrical. I would add also that when his features were in perfect repose his expression was sad and thoughtful. This was intensified by the drooping of the under lid, showing the white of the eye below the iris."

Early in the second week of Conant's visit to Springfield he announced the completion of his portrait. Making preparations to leave "Mr. Lincoln came over, and, looking at the portrait, said: 'You are not going till this evening? I would like Mrs. Lincoln to see that. If you will let it remain here I will bring her at three o'clock.'" Mrs. Lincoln arrived promptly with her son "little Tad" and his playmate called "Jim." Jesse K. Du Bois and O. M. Hatch also came to view the portrait. When it was unveiled Mrs. Lincoln said, "That is excellent, that is the way he looks when he has his friends about him. I hope he will look like that after the first of November." "Meanwhile Tad 'charged around the room like a young colt.' He looked into everything—his mother capturing him now and then and holding him in check. Discovering an unfinished portrait (by George Frederick Wright) Tad said to Jim, 'here is another Old Abe!' The guests appeared not to notice Tad's remark but Lincoln laughed heartily saying, 'Did you hear that Conant? He got that on the street, I suppose.'"

Before Conant left for Saint Louis he called at the Lincoln home, accompanied by his little daughter whom he had brought to Springfield for company at the hotel. Upon telling them good-bye Lincoln inquired if the girl's mother were living. Conant answered in the affirmative and Lincoln said, "I am glad to know it! Somehow I had got the idea that she was an orphan, and I was afraid to ask about her mother for fear I might hurt her feelings."

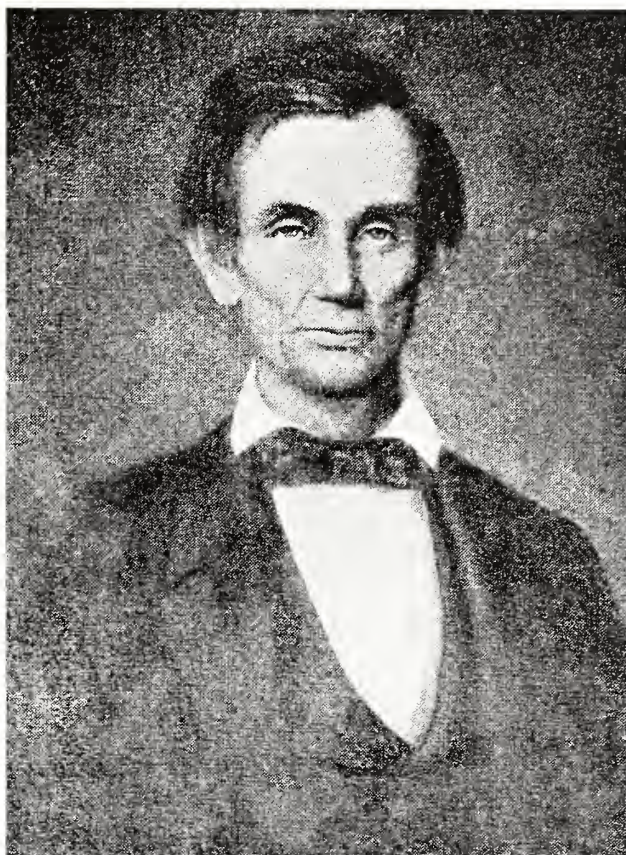
It was Conant's wish that the citizens of Saint Louis would honor him with a commission to paint a full length portrait of Abraham Lincoln. As this did not materialize Conant sold the "smiling Lincoln" to his good friend Colonel James Eads on February 11, 1868. Today the portrait hangs in the Phillipse Manor House at Yonkers, New York, a gift from the late Alexander Cochran Smith of that city. Mr. Smith is said to have paid \$3,750. for the study.

Conant died on February 3, 1915 at the age of ninety-four years. One authority has stated that "during the course of his long life he painted, either single-handed or with the aid of fellow artists, as many portraits of Lincoln as did Gilbert Stuart of Washington in an earlier time." However, of all the portraits which Conant painted—and these include Edwin M. Stanton, Henry Ward Beecher, Dr. James McCash (president of Princeton), Major Robert Anderson of Fort Sumter fame and a host of justices of the Supreme Court—that of the "smiling Lincoln" painted in 1860 remained the most celebrated.

### "THE BUTLER PORTRAIT" BY GEORGE FREDERICK WRIGHT

George Frederick Wright of Connecticut was one of fifteen or twenty artists who went to Springfield, Illinois in the summer and fall of 1860 to paint Abraham Lincoln's portrait. Unlike many other painters who gathered in Springfield, Wright had a fine academic background both in the classical and art fields of study. He studied at the New York National Academy and was in the life class under Daniel Huntington. At the age of twenty-one (born in 1828—some authorities say 1830) he held the position of custodian of the Hartford Wadsworth Athenaeum Gallery, and in that city he painted very acceptably for five years. He next spent two years abroad—in Germany under Professor Albert Grafle, court-painter of Baden, and a summer in Rome. Returning to the United States he painted in several southern and western cities, but principally in Hartford.

In the late summer of 1860 Wright went to Springfield, Illinois, where he received from the State of Illinois



Portrait of Lincoln painted by George Frederick Wright.

a commission to paint the portraits of thirteen former governors. Wright made numerous friends in Springfield, among them Jacob Bunn who was later chairman of the Board of State House Commissioners. Later on he spent considerable time in Belleville, Illinois, where he met the daughter of the exiled Italian nobleman, Count Murrazelli di Monto Pescali. In 1866 he married Marca Arelia Murrazelli.

While painting the former governors of Illinois, Wright secured appointments for sittings for his first portrait of Lincoln. Mr. Lincoln was so besieged with artists that he sized up the situation and laid down some rules. He could recognize no favorites, and to show his fairness he told the artists that he would open his mail about nine o'clock each morning at his headquarters in the State House, and that they would be welcome to line up around the room with their easels and paint simultaneously whatever they could for a period of twenty or thirty minutes every day. It was in this room that Lincoln delivered his famous "House Divided" Speech on June 16, 1858. He was in 1860 fifty-one years of age, clean shaven, with a face unwrinkled as yet by presidential cares.

At the end of the period, when his office had been transformed into a studio, and after a great many of the portraits were finished, Lincoln asked William Butler, who had acted as one of his campaign managers, to express his opinion and judgment as to which of the portraits was the best likeness of himself. Butler was one of Lincoln's particular friends and political advisers and was elected State Treasurer of Illinois in the same election that elevated Lincoln to the presidency. This was the same William Butler at whose home Lincoln had boarded for more than five years after his arrival in Springfield.

Acting on Lincoln's request Butler and his wife and their three children, Salome E. Butler, Speed Butler and Henry Wirt Butler, visited the legislative hall to view the portraits with the idea of selecting the one which was the best likeness of Mr. Lincoln. After viewing all



the portraits that were exhibited, the family was in agreement in the selection of the Wright portrait. A day or two later, Butler informed Lincoln of the family's opinion, whereupon the future president brought the portrait from Wright and presented it to his friend.

The picture became known as the "Butler portrait" and it remained in the possession of the family for many years. At the death of William Butler, the heirloom passed on to his daughter Salome and was by her, a short time prior to her death, given to William J. Butler, a son of Henry Wirt Butler. For many years the portrait was exhibited in the National State Bank in Springfield, Illinois.

Next Edward W. Payne became the owner and when his estate was being settled (he died February 19, 1932) the portrait was ordered to be sold by the sheriff to be applied on judgments against the Payne estate. Probate Judge Benjamin De Boice thereupon restored the painting to the custody of the Springfield Marine Bank and directed that the banking institution seek possible purchasers. As Lincoln's fame grew so did the value of the portrait. Lincoln authorities praised its historical accuracy and boldly declared it was worth \$100,000. At this time (1934) it was rumored that J. P. Morgan had offered a large sum for the portrait. Its fame was further enhanced by its exhibition at the Century of Progress in the Illinois Host Building. Eventually the portrait found permanent ownership at the University of Chicago and it now hangs in the Lincoln Room in Harper Hall.

Wright painted two other portraits of Lincoln both of which are bearded. One of these portraits from life was commissioned by General Horatio G. Wright (painted in Washington, D. C. in 1864) and was purchased by William Randolph Hearst. It was later sold to the Kleeman Galleries and is now in the possession of the University of Chicago and hangs in the Harper Room.

The other portrait is described as an allegorical painting (see Rufus Rockwell Wilson: *Lincoln In Portraiture*, page 249-250). For many years it was owned by Mrs. James Campbell of Mystic, Connecticut, whose father purchased the original from Wright. Mrs. Campbell sold the portrait in 1904 to John Stanton Palmer. For a time it hung in the Public Library at Westerly, Rhode Island. Later the portrait was acquired by the late Percy Rockefeller and is now the property of the estate. A reproduction of this painting appeared in *Harper's Weekly*, Vol. 53, February 13, 1909.

In addition to the painting of the Lincoln portraits and the thirteen governors of Illinois, Wright did the portraits of twenty governors of Connecticut. He also painted a portrait of Gideon Welles, Secretary of the Navy under Lincoln, and Dr. Thomas Hopkins Gallaudet, founder of the American School for the Deaf.

Wright died in 1881 and his wife, an artist of unusual talent, lived until 1919. She was a teacher of painting and languages in Hartford. In her long life of eighty-two years she became acquainted with many of the leading characters of the Civil War period. She could remember having heard John Brown discuss his anti-slavery plans with her slavery-hating father. By chance she was a temporary resident of Minnesota in 1862 and was residing at Stillwater at the time of the Sioux Massacre led by Chief Little Crow.

### Some Additional Facts Pertaining To The Thomas Hicks Portrait of "The Youthful Lincoln"

(See *Lincoln Lore*, No. 1471, September, 1960)

On November 24, 1940 the Parke-Bernet Galleries, Inc., 30 East 57th Street, New York, N. Y., sold the

Lincoln portrait by Hicks to Kennedy & Co., Art Dealers, 785 Fifth Avenue, New York, N. Y., for \$11,100. From newspaper clippings in the Foundation files it appears that Kennedy & Co., purchased the Hicks portrait for Bernon S. Prentice who owned a collection of American and English paintings.

Parke-Bernet Galleries again offered the portrait for sale on April 19, 1952. According to the *New York Herald Tribune*, April 20, 1952 the "First Lincoln Portrait" was purchased by the late Oscar B. Cintas, a former Cuban ambassador to the United States. Mr. Cintas wanted the portrait as a companion item to the Bliss copy of the Gettysburg Address which he bought for \$54,000 after spirited bidding in the same gallery on April 27, 1949. While Mr. Cintas was present at the sale of the Gettysburg Address in 1949, he telephoned from Havana a bid of \$18,000 for the Hicks portrait. This was the successful bid as the second highest bidder offered \$17,500. It is of interest to point out that at this same sale, during the same session one of Gilbert Stuart's portraits of George Washington sold for \$12,000.

On October 5, 1953, in Havana, Cuba, Oscar B. Cintas made a will by which he bequeathed the Hicks portrait of Lincoln to the Chicago Historical Society "as a sign of admiration and respect for its secretary, Paul M. Angle." At the same time he bequeathed his holograph copy of the Gettysburg Address to the United States to be placed on exhibition in the White House." Since the death of Mr. Cintas, his estate has been in litigation, complicated by another will made in New York on April 30, 1957. However, in 1959 the Surrogate Court of New York awarded the Hicks portrait to the Chicago Historical Society and the Gettysburg Address to the United States under the terms of the 1953 will.

### A Presidential Wager Great Pedestrian Feat

"During the last presidential campaign Mr. Edward P. Weston made a wager to the effect that if Abraham Lincoln was elected by the people president of the United States, he would agree to walk from Boston to Washington inside of ten consecutive days, and be present at the inauguration. He will leave the State House, Boston, at noon today, and will be accompanied by two friends, who ride in a carriage a short distance behind him to succor him in case of necessity, and also to see that he carries out his agreement to the letter. He expects to arrive at Washington at 4 p.m. March 3d—the whole time occupied in walking from Boston to Washington to be two hundred and eight hours."

The (Baltimore) *Sun*  
February 22, 1861

### An English Opinion Of Mr. Lincoln's Second Inaugural

"The London Spectator remarks of president Lincoln's Inaugural Address that 'for political weight; moral dignity and uneffected solemnity it has had no equal in our time.' After quoting from the language of the address, it adds; 'No statesman ever uttered words stamped at once with the seal of so deep a wisdom and so true a simplicity. The village attorney of whom Sir. G. C. Lewis and many other wise men wrote with so much scorn in 1861, seems destined to be one of those foolish things of the old world which are destined to confound the wise, one of those weak things which shall confound the things which are mighty.'"

Fort Wayne, (Ind.) *Daily Gazette*  
April 15, 1865





# Lincoln Lore

September, 1979

Bulletin of the Louis A. Warren Lincoln Library and Museum. Mark E. Neely, Jr., Editor.  
Mary Jane Hubler, Editorial Assistant. Published each month by the  
Lincoln National Life Insurance Company, Fort Wayne, Indiana 46801.

Number 1699

## LINCOLN'S SPRINGFIELD FRIENDS: FRIENDS OF THE NEGRO

On June 24, 1847, Benjamin Bond offered a resolution to the Illinois Constitutional Convention "to report a provision prohibiting free negroes from emigrating into this State, and that no person shall bring slaves into this State from other States and set them free." Bond's motion eventually became Article 14 of the Illinois Constitution. Abraham Lincoln was not a member of the constitutional convention, and, since he assumed his seat in the United States House of Representatives in December, he was not in Springfield on March 6, 1848, to vote on the article. There is nothing on the subject in his surviving correspondence. Some of Lincoln's friends and political associates, however, were members of the convention, and many of his Springfield neighbors did vote on the constitution — and on Article 14, which was submitted separately for a vote — in the spring of 1848. The record of the convention and of the votes of his Springfield friends goes a long way towards dashing any argument that Abraham Lincoln's racial views were deeply rooted in Western negrophobia.

Benjamin Bond was a Whig, but his resolution stirred plenty of opposition among fellow Whig delegates to the constitutional convention. Stephen Trigg Logan, who had been Lincoln's law partner three years before, was one of the Whig delegates who had doubts about the resolution. "It was a subject of a good deal of delicacy," he suggested, "and one upon which it was difficult at all times clearly to distinguish between judgement and prejudice." John M. Palmer, a Democrat, detested "one idea" reformers, but "Every impulse of his heart and every feeling of his, was in opposition to slavery." Agitation of the subject blocked quiet movements to ameliorate the slaves' condition and "remove the great stain of moral guilt now upon this great republic." The proposition, therefore, should not be in the constitution. Logan, too,

wanted to leave the proposition out, in part because he "respected the abolitionists and believed them to be honest and sincere." Stephen A. Hurlbut, a Whig like Logan, "never would consent to" the proposition.

Lincoln's brother-in-law Ninian Wirt Edwards was also a member of the convention. A month after Bond offered his resolution, Edwards suggested a cleverly thought out amendment to the proposed bill of rights:

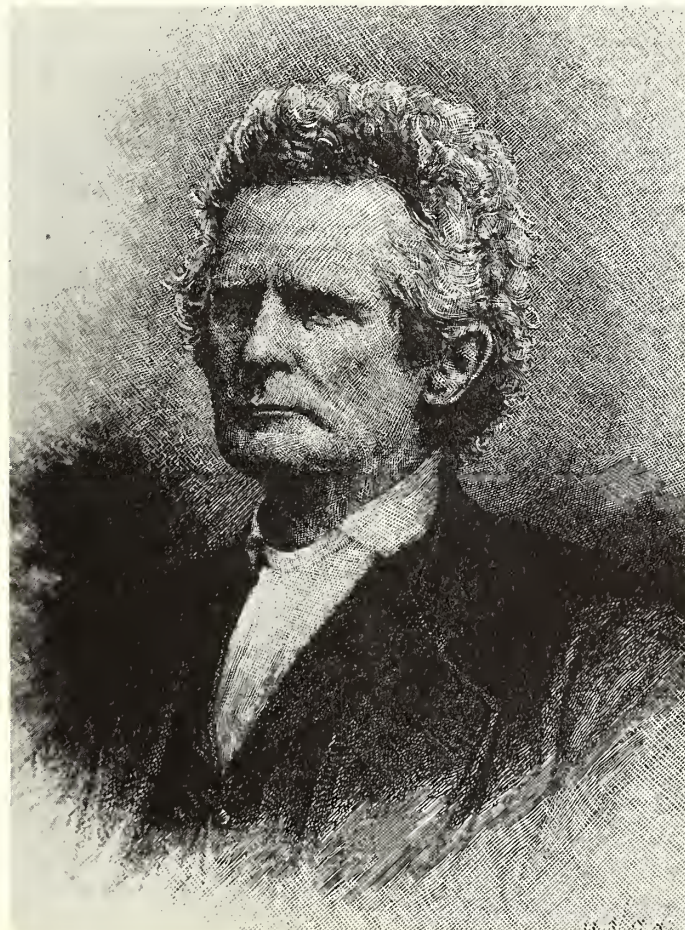
Whereas, so much of section nineteen of the bill of rights as provides for the restriction upon blacks, in connection with certain civil rights, privileges and immunities, is an implied admission of their possession of such rights, as citizens of this state and the United States, in the absence

of such constitutional restrictions; and, *whereas*, the directions therein given to the Legislature presupposes that any portion of the people of this state would be in favor of conferring such rights and privileges (as is therein denied) to colored people; and *whereas*, the Legislature would have no power to allow to persons of color to hold office and without any constitutional prohibition have already passed laws with severe penalties, not only making intermarriage and marriage contracts between them and the whites a criminal offence, but null and void, therefore,

*Resolved*, That said article be committed to the committee on Revision with instructions to omit so much of said section as refers to persons of color.

Springfield voted overwhelmingly to bar entry of Negroes into Illinois, 774-148. The minuscule 16% minority which defied prejudice, however, contained a number of people whose names are quite familiar to Lincoln students.

STEPHEN TRIGG LOGAN was true to his stand at the convention. On voting day he voted against the exclusion clause. A Kentuckian, like Lincoln, Logan had been Lincoln's law partner from 1841 to 1844, when the partnership was amicably dissolved so that Logan could bring his son David



From the Louis A. Warren  
Lincoln Library and Museum

FIGURE 1. Stephen Trigg Logan grew timid in old age, but in 1848 he said "no."



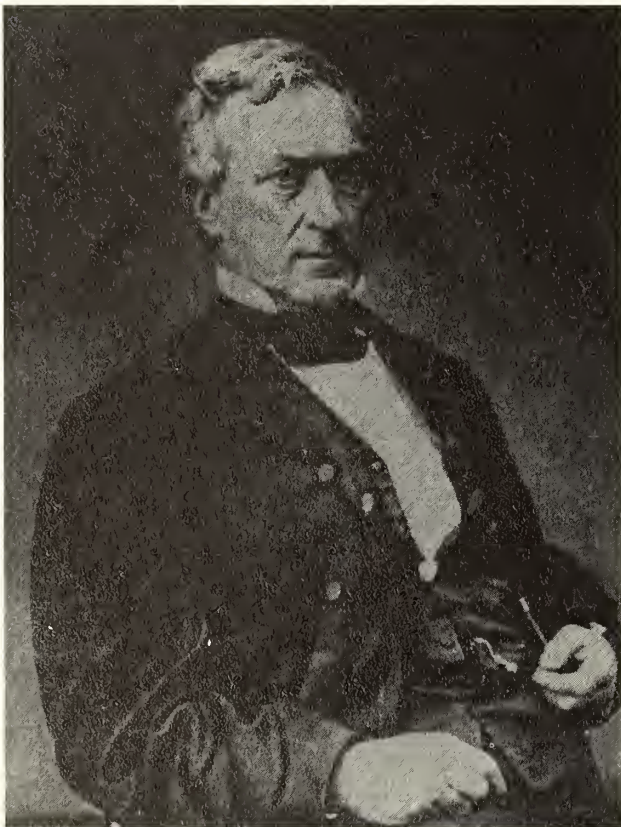
into his firm. Lincoln and Logan were close associates in the Whig party in the 1840s, and Logan would be the Whig candidate for Lincoln's Congressional seat the next August.

NINIAN WIRT EDWARDS was also true to his position at the convention and voted against the exclusion clause. Edwards, also a Kentuckian by birth, had married Mary Todd Lincoln's sister Elizabeth in 1832. Edwards was also a Whig, though his political views differed considerably in tone from Lincoln's. Usher F. Linder recalled that the socially prominent Edwards hated "democracy . . . as the devil is said to hate holy water." In August he would run for the Illinois House of Representatives.

ANSON G. HENRY, who was one of Lincoln's closest political associates in the 1840s as well as his doctor, voted against the clause barring Negroes from Illinois. Lincoln and Henry were perhaps the most organization-minded Whigs in the state, and the doctor was a tireless letter-writer and political worker. Henry had been born in Richfield, New York, but had lived in Illinois since the early 1830s. Later in 1848, he and Lincoln would stump the district for Zachary Taylor.

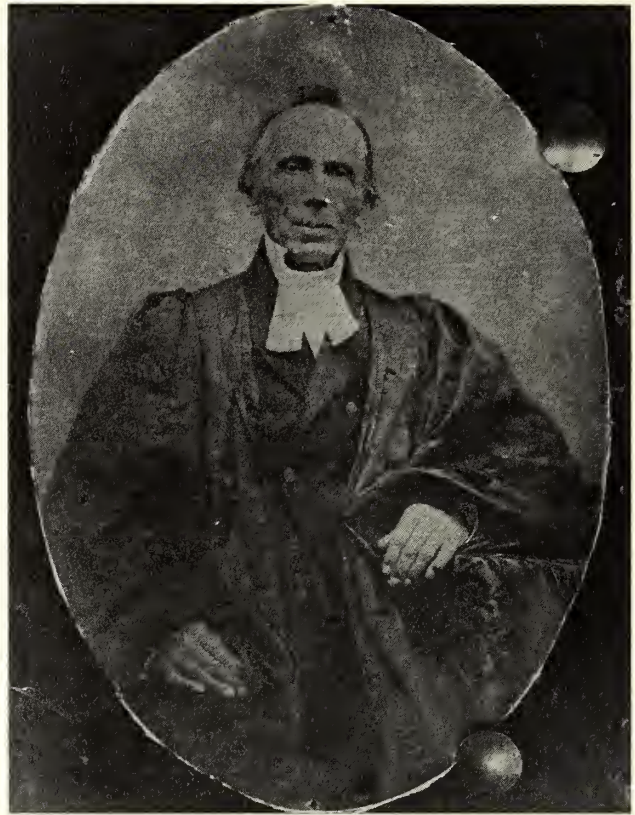
SIMEON FRANCIS, who also voted against the exclusion clause, was the editor of Springfield's Whig newspaper, the *Illinois State Journal*. After what Lincoln referred to as the fatal first of January, 1841, Mrs. Francis had been instrumental in getting Lincoln and Mary Todd back together again. Simeon Francis frequently opened the *Journal's* pages to Lincoln. He had been born in Connecticut, but he moved to Springfield in 1831. By 1848 he was thinking of moving to Oregon, and a year later Lincoln would seek his appointment as Secretary of Oregon Territory from the Taylor administration.

JAMES COOK CONKLING, another opponent of the exclusion clause, was a Princeton graduate, born in New York City. When he moved to Springfield in 1838, he very quickly moved into genteel society. He married Mercy Ann Levering, one of Mary Todd Lincoln's best friends. A Whig in politics, Conkling had been elected mayor of Springfield in 1844.



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FIGURE 2. John Todd Stuart abstained.



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FIGURE 3. The Reverend Charles Dresser abstained.

JAMES HARVEY MATHENY was also a Whig associate of Lincoln's. He was probably the best man at Lincoln's wedding in 1842. In 1858 Stephen A. Douglas would call Matheny, Lincoln's "especial confidential friend for the last twenty years." He was an Illinois native.

ALBERT TAYLOR BLEDSOE was the chief editorial writer for the *Illinois State Journal* while Lincoln was in Congress. Born in Kentucky, he was a West Point graduate, an Episcopal minister at one time, and, for a time, the law partner of Lincoln's friend Edward D. Baker. A Whig in politics, Bledsoe would move from Springfield later in 1848 to take up residence in Mississippi, where his racial views would change a great deal.

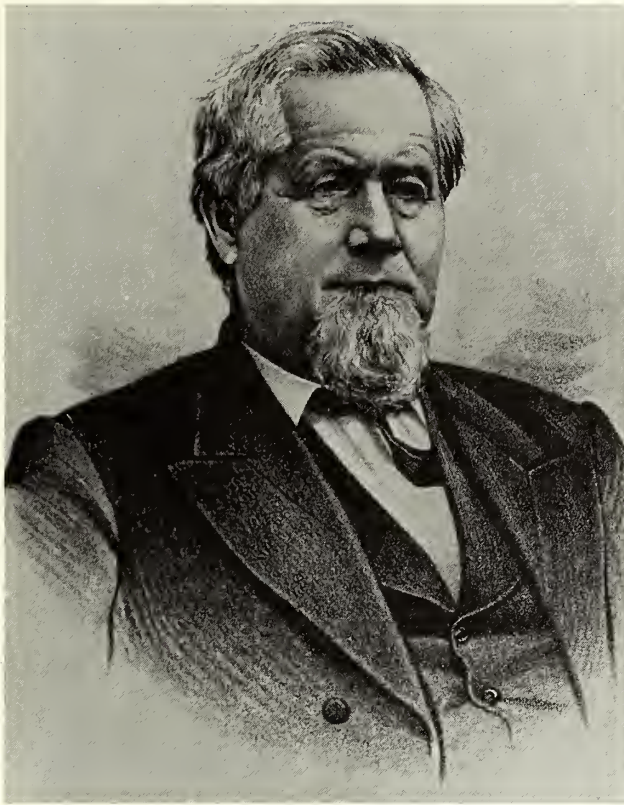
BENJAMIN S. EDWARDS voted, as his brother Ninian Wirt did, against the exclusion article. A Yale graduate, his legal career had brought him many of the same acquaintances Lincoln had. After studying law in New Haven, he read law in Stephen T. Logan's office, was briefly associated with Edward D. Baker, and in 1843 became John Todd Stuart's partner. Stuart had been Lincoln's first law partner. Edwards was a Whig.

Some people who voted for the constitution did not vote on the Negro exclusion clause. The meaning of an abstention on this issue is not altogether clear, but it shows at least a lack of aggressive prejudice, a willingness not to bait the race issue, and a contentment with leaving the free Negro alone.

JOHN TODD STUART abstained on the exclusion article. A Kentuckian who became Lincoln's political mentor in the Illinois Legislature, Stuart was also the man who encouraged Lincoln to study law. Thereafter, he showed his faith in the New Salem railsplitter by taking him as his partner.

CHARLES DRESSER also abstained from voting on the exclusion article. Born in Connecticut, he became Springfield's Episcopal Rector in 1838. On November 4, 1842, he solemnized the marriage vows of Abraham Lincoln and Mary Todd.





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FIGURE 4. John M. Palmer.

Not all of the voters against the Negro exclusion clause were Whigs or friends of Abraham Lincoln, of course. Peter Cartwright, an ardent Democrat whom Lincoln had defeated in his race for Congress in 1846, voted against the article. And John Calhoun, another Democrat who had appointed the penniless Lincoln as his deputy surveyor in New Salem, abstained from voting on the article.

Nor were Lincoln's personal and political friends unanimous in their opposition to the exclusion of free Negroes from Illinois.

WILLIAM HENRY HERNDON voted for the exclusion article. At the time of the vote, he was Lincoln's law partner and enthusiastic Whig ally. They were having a dispute, however, over Lincoln's opposition to the Mexican War. Herndon could not understand Lincoln's stand in a constitutional, moral, or political sense, though Lincoln sent him letter after letter explaining his position.

DAVID LOGAN did not vote the way his father Stephen Trigg Logan voted. He supported the exclusion of Negroes from the state.

WILLIAM BUTLER, famed for his ability to predict the outcome of elections, was born in Kentucky. A friend of Stephen T. Logan's, he was an active Whig and a political associate of Lincoln's. He supported the exclusion article.

The preponderance in number as well as in importance in Lincoln's life lay with those who opposed the exclusion article. Lincoln's friends opposed it, though there were significant exceptions — most notably, William Herndon.

The vote on this constitutional article is not a reliable predictor of later political behavior. Hurlbut became a Republican and was entrusted by Lincoln in 1861 with a delicate information-gathering mission to South Carolina. Palmer also became a Republican and a sturdy supporter of Lincoln's political career. Lincoln in turn made him a brigadier general. Other members of the constitutional convention who protested anti-black legislation had very different political careers. Edwards became a Democrat — a move that shocked Lincoln — and he opposed Lincoln's

election in 1860. Logan's politics during the Lincoln administration were murky. Herndon said that he was like other "monied men": "old & timid — disturbed and terrified." During Reconstruction he became a Democrat, though he later returned to the Republican fold.

Simeon Francis, Anson Henry, and James Cook Conkling became Republicans. Conkling was staunchly antislavery and told President Lincoln of his hope that Union military victories would leave "no question as to the condition and rights of 'American citizens of African descent.'"

Matheny, on the other hand, dragged his feet in becoming a Republican, entering the party much later than Lincoln. Edwards became a Republican in 1856, but he switched to the Democratic party a year later. Albert Taylor Bledsoe, far from becoming a Republican, grew gradually to advocate slavery as biblically justified. He was the Assistant Secretary of War of the Confederate States of America!

The complexities of American politics in the middle of the nineteenth century prevent attaching any clear racial views to those of Lincoln's friends who opposed the exclusion article. Their later political views were not necessarily consistent with a friendly stance towards the Negro. Moreover, the extremism of the article probably caused some to doubt its constitutionality, no matter what their sentiments on racial questions. Still, the mass of voters certainly did not think it extreme, and over 80% of Springfield's citizens supported it. To be a part of so small a minority in opposition was a significant, even heroic, act.

*Editor's Note:* Archivist Dean DeBolt of the Sangamon State University Library generously sent microfilmed copies of the poll books on which this article is based.

#### R. GERALD McMURTRY LECTURES PUBLICATIONS AVAILABLE

Printed copies of the 1979 R. Gerald McMurtry Lecture, Don E. Fehrenbacher's *The Minor Affair: An Adventure in Forgery and Detection*, are available on request. A few copies of the 1978 lecture, Richard N. Current's *Unity, Ethnicity, & Abraham Lincoln*, are still available as well. Requests will be filled as long as supplies last.

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